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ABSTRACT

In 1977 the Center for Continuing Education of Women (CEW) at the University of Michigan initiated a study of the lives of women who had gone to CEW during 1964-73. Effects of the transition from the traditional wife-mother-homemaker role to employment were examined among women of different ages and points of the life cycle, with particular attention to the relationships between career orientation and self-views. A 10-page questionnaire was returned by 1145 respondents, aged 22-83 of reasonably high socioeconomic status. Employed women showed higher self-esteem than unemployed women. Life satisfaction showed essentially the same pattern of relationships to work status. Work status was not, however, significantly related to self-esteem or life satisfaction among women 35-44. Reasons considered for this behavior were family-state, type of job, and her perception of her husband's attitudes about pursuing a career. Data seemed to corroborate a picture of women 35-44 as caught in a time warp where they accept and are influenced by new options opening to women but do not reject older values and interests. Current level of employment appeared to be related to maternal employment. (The paper ends with a summary of figures on the current CEW population to help illustrate issues involved in serving these women and to suggest the breadth and complexity of the CEW counseling process. Six tables are appended.) (YLB)

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RELATIONSHIPS AMONG CAREER ORIENTATION, EMPLOYMENT STATUS, SELF-ESTEEM,
AND LIFE SATISFACTION OF WOMEN: AN ANALYSIS OF AGE DIFFERENCES

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RELATIONSHIPS AMONG CAREER ORIENTATION, EMPLOYMENT STATUS, SELF-ESTEEM,
AND LIFE SATISFACTION OF WOMEN: AN ANALYSIS OF AGE DIFFERENCES

The Center for Continuing Education of Women at the University of Michigan was created in 1964 to provide information, counseling, and advocacy services to the increasing number of adult women who wished to complete undergraduate or graduate degrees (whether they were resuming an interrupted education, or beginning a new program). CEW functioned to help women select and gain admission to existing standard academic programs; it was not aimed at setting up special courses for such women. Demands for its services increased steadily, and for the past eight years, between 1100 and 1200 women annually have sought ^{first-time} individual counseling appointments at CEW. (In addition, many others have participated in interest groups, attended workshops, used the library, won CEW scholarships, or enrolled in regular U-M courses which the University was persuaded to offer in the evening, to facilitate attendance by women with small children.) CEW's counseling services are open to anyone in the community, and there is no charge to the participant.

In 1977, with the aid of a general support grant from the Ford Foundation, we initiated a major effort to find out what had happened in the lives of the women who had come to CEW during its first ten years (1964-1973). For many of these women, a return to school was the first step in a gradual re-definition of the traditional wife-mother-homemaker role, and it was frequently followed by a transition to employment and the development of long-range career goals. We wanted to examine the effects of this process among women of different ages and points of the life cycle, with particular attention to the relationships between career orientation and self-views. Cast in these terms, our study thus reflected the growing interest in adult development and change across the life course, an interest being expressed in different ways

in the fields of education, psychology, and sociology. In this paper, we wish to describe some relationships between work status and well-being which appear to be age-related, and to consider the relative importance of cohort versus life-cycle influences in interpreting these patterns.

Sample

In the fall of 1977, a 10-page questionnaire was mailed to all participants from the first 10 years for whom a recent address could be found. Approximately 3200 questionnaires were sent out, and 1145 were returned. (Since there was many inaccuracies in the addresses used, one cannot use the figures just cited to calculate a response rate. On the basis of an attempt to reach by telephone a certain proportion of non-respondents, we estimate that of the women who actually received the questionnaire, at least 60 percent returned it.)

Respondents ranged in age from 22 to 83, with 1110 in the 25-64 age range; about one-third were 25-34, another third were 35-44, and the rest were 45 or older (about 20 percent were 45-54, and 10 percent 55-64). Nearly three-fourths of the women were married; fifteen percent were divorced; and nine percent had never married. Most of the women had children, and about half of them had had an interruption of five years or more in both their educational and work histories. Their husbands tended to be highly educated professionals: 20 percent of them held academic ranks, and 27 percent were doctors, lawyers, engineers, or scientists. A third of the husbands earned annual salaries of \$30,000 or more, and another 30 percent earned between \$20,000 and \$30,000 annually.

Nearly half (47%) of our respondents were employed fulltime, 28 percent were employed parttime, and 25 percent were not employed outside the home. Nearly three-fourths of them said that they thought of themselves as having or planning a career. With respect to educational attainment, 43 percent had

earned master's degrees, and about a third held BA or other undergraduate degrees; nine percent had earned high-level professional degrees--Ph.D.'s, M.D.'s, law degrees, or MBA's. If you take into account the educational goals of those who had not yet completed their education, then roughly a fourth of the women had or aspired to high level professional degrees. About 20 percent of the women had received their highest degree when they were 40 or more years old; nearly half (46%) had earned their highest degree at age 30 or more. With respect to their employment settings, 27 percent of those employed were working in colleges or universities--about 10 percent in faculty positions, and the rest as research or administrative associates or assistants, or clericals. Seventeen percent were employed in schools at the K-12 level; eleven percent were employed in non-profit agencies (including hospitals); ten percent were employed in governmental settings other than schools; and eighteen percent were employed in business settings. (Generally, the women in business tended to be those with less education.) For the most part, then, these respondents are able women, of reasonably high socioeconomic status, who had followed for at least a portion of their lives the traditional pattern of wives and homemakers--that is, they had not continuously pursued careers once they had children and their husbands were established in their careers.

RESULTS

Self-Esteem, Life Satisfaction, and Employment Status

Overall, women who were employed showed higher self-esteem than did women who were not employed; indeed, those employed fulltime showed higher self-esteem than did those employed parttime, who in turn showed higher self-esteem than did those who were not employed (fulltime=1.57; parttime=1.67; not working=1.80; $p=.0000$). (See Figure 1 for the six items included in the self-esteem index.)^{1/}

In order to examine this relationship more closely, we divided respondents into four groups according to employment status--not working, working part-time, working fulltime at salaries less than \$17,000, and working fulltime at salaries of \$17,000 or more--as a measure of their current level of involvement in the workforce. This salary break was adopted as indicating a fairly high level of achievement for our respondents--modal salary for those employed fulltime was roughly \$16,000--while still including enough cases in the higher category to permit adequate analysis. The relationships between work status and self-esteem for each of four age groups are shown in Table 1. Note that self-esteem is not related to age, overall. Within each age group, however, women who are not employed tend to show the lowest self-esteem, and those employed fulltime at the higher salaries ("FTHI's") tend to show the highest. This pattern is highly significant in the 25-34 and 45-54 age groups, and approaches significance in the oldest group. Among the women who are 35-44, however, the pattern does not even approach significance. As can be seen in the second panel of Table 1, the same pattern of relationships appears if one looks only at those respondents who are currently married.^{2/} In this case, the pattern is significant for the older group also, but still not significant for the 35-44's.

Life satisfaction, as measured by respondents' rating of the item "I think of my life today as interesting and satisfying," shows essentially the same pattern of relationships to work status as does self-esteem (see Table 2). Again, the relationship is highly significant for the younger women and the women aged 45-54, it approaches significance for the oldest group (the smaller N's here are obviously a factor), but does not approach significance for the 35-44 age group. In this case, however, the relation-

ship is significant even for this group when we look at currently married respondents. (Our measures of self-esteem and life satisfaction are clearly related ($r=.48$), but they nevertheless are tapping somewhat different dimensions, as shown by their varying relationships to other variables.)

Again, satisfaction with life does not appear to be related to age, by itself, though there is a slight suggestion that, among the married women, the older women are perhaps the most satisfied with their current lives.

Another question which tapped a respondent's satisfaction with her life, in another way, was the following: "Taking your day-to-day life in general, are you doing all the things you would really like to be doing?" Four response categories were offered: Yes, for the most part, not entirely, and definitely not. Respondents who checked any answer other than "Yes" were then asked what was missing in their lives. The percentage saying "Yes" to the first question did not vary a great deal by age (about 16 percent, overall, with 40 percent saying that they were, for the most part." Employed women and not-employed women were about equally likely to indicate that they were not doing all that they would like to. However, their reports of what was missing in their lives varied substantially, with employed women commenting most frequently on lack of time--for self, family, friends, recreation, hobbies, and activities--while the most frequent response of women who were not working was that they wished they had a job.³ Since these two items--the "interesting life" and the "doing all" question--seemed to be tapping somewhat different aspects of satisfaction--the "interesting life" item reflecting a sense of adequate stimulation and challenge, and the "not doing all" question more a sense of constraints on one's activities--we created a combined measure by summing over the two items, thus creating an

index with possible scores from 2 to 9 (possible scores on "interesting life" were 1 to 5, and possible scores on "doing all" were 1 to 4).

This combined index (see Table 3) shows the same pattern of relationships we have already observed in Tables 1 and 2, but perhaps sheds some light on the issue of why work status is not significantly related to self-esteem or life satisfaction among women in the 35-44 age group. Women in this age group who are not employed tend to express less dissatisfaction than do the non-employed women at other ages, while those who are employed fulltime at higher salaries express greater dissatisfaction than do their counterparts in the other groups. Apparently, for this transitional cohort, the demands and satisfactions of non-career roles--family, recreational and volunteer activities, or even educational preparation for future employment--are sufficient that the homemaker-only status is not experienced as terribly limiting or unfulfilling, while fulltime employment in a professional career entails a sharply felt curtailment of other interesting activities.

In an attempt to gain a better understanding of why, among the women who are working fulltime at higher salaries, the 35-44's do not show the same boost in self-esteem seen in the younger and next older groups, we examined several hypotheses. We first pursued a life-cycle or family-stage sort of explanation: that is, the 45-54's, because their children are growing up, no longer face severe conflict related to their parental role, while the younger group of women--the 25-34's--may not have started their families yet, and thus it is primarily the women in the 35-44 age group who are both very much involved in parental roles and responsibilities, and trying to pursue careers at the same time. Hence they may experience more guilt and stress, which affects their self-esteem and satisfaction with life.

However, if we look only at women in this work category and this age group who have no children, they show no higher self-esteem than those who do. And conversely, among the younger women (25-34) who do have children, we still note a significant difference in self-esteem between those who are employed fulltime at higher salaries and those who are not working. Although the numbers involved are too small to place great confidence in these very specific sorts of comparisons, nevertheless, there seems to be no suggestion in the data that family stage as such is the crucial factor involved.

We next considered the types of jobs held by the FTHI's in the different age groups. Here some interesting differences immediately come to light (See Table 4). Of the 35-44 FTHI's, 31 percent hold academic appointments (faculty appointment at the college or university level). By contrast, only 15 percent of the 45-54 FTHI's, and only 13 percent of the 25-34 FTHI's, hold such appointments. (In line with this difference, almost twice as many of the 35-44 FTHI's held Ph.D. degrees as was true for the 45-54's.) Of the 45-54 FTHI's, 34 percent were teachers at the elementary or secondary school level, social workers or other counselors, or librarians--traditional professions for women. Only 23 percent of the 35-44 FTHI's held such positions. In fact, when we look at type of employer, we note an even more striking difference: Over 40 percent of the 34-44 and 55-64 FTHI's are employed by colleges and universities, compared to only 16 percent of the 25-34 and 45-54 FTHI's (see Table 5). ^ (In addition to faculty positions, such employment includes a wide range of service or support staff positions, such as research or administrative associates or assistants.

Such positions may involve challenging and interesting work, and may even be relatively well-paid, but they do not afford the prestige and respect of appointments at the faculty or primary research ranks.)

It thus appears the FTHI women in the 35-44 age group are more apt than their counterparts at other ages to be pursuing higher level careers, which may indeed be harder to reconcile with the daily demands of family living—for example, as college professors rather than teachers at the K-12 level—or, if not in such positions, to be employed in settings where their jobs are seen as clearly subsidiary to the faculty or research positions which are viewed as the heart of the institution. Furthermore, the salary break used here—above or below \$17,000—may have differential significance depending on the employment setting; among women in the traditional professions for women—public school teachers, etc.—the \$17,000 may represent greater achievement, relative to their peers, than it does among those with faculty appointments at the college level, where many of our respondents may occupy entry-level or other positions near the bottom of the academic ladder.

A third factor we considered was the respondent's attitudes about pursuing a career, and her perception of her husband's attitudes. For example, we had asked respondents to indicate their views, and their perception of their husband's views, on the question of to what extent the husband should share housekeeping and childcare tasks; respondents were asked to use a seven-point scale, with one end of the scale representing the view that the husband should have no responsibility for such tasks, and the other end representing the view that he should share equally in such tasks. Respondents' ratings on these items showed clear age effects, with younger women describing both their own and their husband's attitudes

as more egalitarian than did older women. Among married women who were employed fulltime and who thought of themselves as having or planning careers, attitudes on this issue were significantly related to age. Furthermore, attitudes of the 35-44 and 45-54 women were very similar; it was among the younger women, those less than 35, that the markedly more liberal attitudes were expressed.

On the other hand, when we asked about the husband's attitude about the wife working--using a five-point scale ranging from strongly opposed to strongly in favor--we found no such relationship to age; essentially, women who were employed, whatever their age, reported that their husbands were in favor of their working. For the most part, this support may reflect recognition of the economic benefits associated with her employment; in part, however, it may reflect the husband's acceptance of the fact that the wife wishes to work and is happier doing so. That the husband's favorable attitude is not based on economic factors alone is suggested by the fact that, among those 45 or more years old, and among those who are less than 35, the husband's attitude toward the wife working is not related to his salary; in the 35-44 age group, however, the husband's attitude toward his wife working is related to his salary--that is, the lower his salary, the more favorable his attitude toward her working. This finding suggests that the women in the 35-44 age group may sense only a grudging acceptance of their career aspirations from their husbands, as distinct from the younger cohort, in which both men and women are more accepting of women's careers, and from the older cohorts, for whom the wife's employment presents fewer problems because of diminishing parental responsibilities.

Our respondents' views of their work--whether they thought of themselves as having or planning a career--were also related to age. Of the women who were less than 35 years old, 88 percent described themselves as having or planning a career, compared to 81 percent of those 35-44, 69 percent of those 45-54, and 51 percent of those 55-64. Furthermore, among the older women, career orientation was related to marital status, with divorced women more likely than married women to describe themselves as having careers; among the younger women, however, career orientation was not related to marital status--single, married, and divorced women were equally likely to be interested in careers. On a set of six items designed to tap the relative priorities placed on career versus marital or parental roles, which we called the career emphasis scale, not only did the career-oriented women give greater emphasis to career concerns than did non-career women, as one would expect, but among the women who were interested in careers, younger women clearly gave greater priority to career concerns than did older women.

Our respondents' views of themselves, as measured by self-ratings on a set of adjectives, also revealed interesting variations across age groups. Overall, career-oriented women tended to hold reasonably positive self-views, whether they are currently employed or not. These positive self-views include both agentic qualities (independent, resourceful, intellectual) as well as qualities seemingly more closely related to the traditional feminine role (attractive, socially successful). Non-career women tended to hold similarly positive views of themselves with respect to the traditional qualities, but are less apt to see themselves in strongly agentic terms. With respect to work status categories, generally women who were employed fulltime at higher salaries described themselves more positively than did women who were not employed. However, among the 35-44's, the FTHI's did not differ as much from the

women who were not working as was true for the other age groups. For example, across the four age groups, roughly 40 percent of the women^{who} were not employed described themselves as "very independent." Among the FTHI's however, more than 70 percent of the 25-34's and 45-54's, but only 57 percent of the 35-44's, viewed themselves as very independent.

This comparison is even more striking if we limit our analysis to women who are married, and have had only one marriage. (Overall, about 70 percent of single or divorced women described themselves as very independent, compared to 40 percent of married women.) Across the four age groups, from 35 to 38 percent of the married women who were not employed described themselves as very independent. By contrast, among the FTHI's, 68 percent of the 25-34's, and 64 percent of the 45-54's--but only 39 percent of the 35-44's--describe themselves in this manner.

The extent to which the 35-44's are "caught in the middle" of a social revolution is shown also by several other measures. Two of the items in the career-emphasis scale mentioned above were the following: "I can't picture having a fully satisfying life without a career of my own," and "I can't imagine having a fully satisfying life without having children." On the first item, overall, there was a clear age trend, with 54 percent of the younger women expressing agreement with the statement, compared to 45 percent of the 35-44's, 32 percent of the 45-54's and 28 percent of the 55-64's. With respect to the corresponding item about children, however, the pattern of responses was somewhat different: only 25 percent of the 25-34's agreed with the statement, but the other three age groups did not vary substantially--41 percent of the 35-44's and 55-64's, and 45 percent of the 45-54's, expressed agreement with

the statement. If we look only at the FTHI's, we also see different patterns of response to the two items. With respect to the career item, 65 percent of the 25-34 FTHI's and 69 percent of the 35-44 FTHI's express agreement with the view that they could not picture a fully satisfying life without having a career of their own; 55 percent of the two older groups express such agreement. With respect to the item about having children, there is a more linear pattern of responses, but with the greatest gap between the youngest women and the others: 13 percent of the 25-34 FTHI's express agreement with the statement that they could not imagine having a fully satisfying life without having children, compared to 34 percent of the 35-44's, 40 percent of the 45-54's, and 45 percent of the 55-64's.

In general, then, we feel that these data corroborate a picture of the women in their mid- to late-thirties and early 40's as caught in a kind of time-warp; they are accepting and being influenced by the new options and goals, with respect to careers, that are opening to women, but they have not rejected the older set of values and interests that have traditionally been attached to marital and parental roles and responsibilities. As this middle group has moved into more demanding career roles, but within the context of already established family roles, they face greater conflict and stress than have the older women, who added careers later in their lives, and the younger ones, who perhaps have their career goals more firmly fixed before entering into family roles.

Two other pieces of evidence tend to corroborate this interpretation. At the end of the questionnaire, we asked our respondents what they would do differently, if anything, if they could start all over. We asked specifically about four different areas--getting an education, planning a career, getting married, and having children. It was the women aged 35-44, across all four work categories, who were most apt to say that they would do something different about having children. (Very few of our respondents, overall, said that they would have no children; more commonly, they said that they would have waited later to have children, or waited until they had finished their education, etc.) My point is not that the 35-44's necessarily differed in what they would do differently, but rather that they more frequently felt that the integration of the two spheres had not been as well-planned or well-managed as they would prefer. (For further discussion of these and other responses, see Manis and Markus, 1980.)

The other kind of evidence that I would like to mention concerns the employment patterns of respondents' mothers. Previous researchers have noted a relationship between choice of non-traditional career fields by college women and maternal employment (see, for example, Tangri, 1968). Among the CEW respondents, most of whom followed a fairly traditional path early in their married lives, current level of involvement in the work force also appears to be related to maternal employment, but that relationship varies by age, and appears chiefly with respect to maternal employment at a family stage where such employment would have been least

likely to occur (see Table 6). Among the women who are 45-64 years of age, 23 percent of those working fulltime reported that their mothers had worked when they had preschool children, compared to 9 percent of those who were not working or who were employed parttime. Differences in maternal employment at other points--before marriage, or after marriage before children, for example--were much less striking. Among the 35 to 44 age group, the significant break came between those working fulltime at higher salaries and all others: 35 percent of the FTHI's reported that their mothers had worked when they had preschool children, compared to 17 percent of those who were not employed, 22 percent of those employed parttime, and 19 percent of those employed fulltime at lower salaries. Again, maternal employment before marriage, and after marriage before children, showed essentially no relation to respondents' current work status.

Among the women who are less than 35 years old, a different pattern appears; in this age group, women who are working fulltime at higher salaries are somewhat less likely to report that their mothers worked when they had preschool children--20% of the FTHI's, compared to 28% of the respondents who were not working--and this difference also applied to maternal employment with older children in the home; 48% of the FTHI's compared to 61% of those not employed, reported such maternal employment.

Greater understanding of these relationships may be gained by an examination of the parental education variables. Among the respondents who are 45 or older, educational attainment of mother and father

shows essentially no relationship to the current work status of the respondent. Among the women who are 35-44, there appears to be no relationship between parental education up to and including a college degree and current work status of the respondent; having parents who earned a graduate or professional degree is slightly more likely to be true of women who are employed parttime or not employed.

Among the younger respondents, the FTHI's are more likely to have mothers with no more than a high school education, and more likely to have fathers with less than a high school education, than are the other respondents. Since women with less education typically held more traditional sex-role attitudes, and have generally been less able to find parttime employment which might be compatible with childrearing, their lower level of education may account for the lower level of maternal employment with preschool children cited above. This finding also suggests that, for the younger respondents, the career achievement represented by fulltime employment at relatively high salaries is more likely to represent an upward movement with respect to socioeconomic status, compared to their parents, than is true for the older women.

There is at least a slight suggestion in the data that, particularly in the 35-44 age group, women who are employed parttime are somewhat more likely to have had mothers who did not work. In this age group, this tendency can be seen for employment after marriage before children, and with older children; for the older women, it appears for maternal employment before marriage; and for the younger women, it appears for maternal employment after marriage before children. This maternal employment pattern does not appear to be generally related to differences in parental education. Furthermore, the women who are employed parttime appear to be similar in socioeconomic status (husband's level of education and salary) to the women who are employed fulltime at higher salaries. Thus, it appears that among women of similar socioeconomic background and of similar current family status, the role model provided by the

mother may be one of the significant influences affecting whether a woman moves toward fulltime career involvement or opts for parttime employment.

In discussing these differences between women in different age groups, we do not mean to imply that age itself is the significant variable involved. Rather, we assume that we find these age differences because of differences in socialization patterns and the historical experiences of the women we are describing. In multivariate analyses (MCA's) of influences on self-esteem or life satisfaction, in which age is added as a control along with such factors as level of education, work status, marital status, husband's salary, etc., age invariably emerges as the least important predictor.^{4/} That is, knowing how much a woman enjoys her work, or whether she wishes she had a better job, or whether she views herself as independent and occupationally successful, is far more important, in predicting her self-esteem or satisfaction with life, than knowing her age. Similarly, in zero-order correlations between family stage and self-esteem or life satisfaction, women with preschool age children show lower self-esteem or life satisfaction. But in multivariate analyses, a variable indicating presence or absence of a preschool child is not an important predictor; again, it is the lack of job satisfaction, or concern with lack of progress toward one's goals, or perhaps lack of positive feedback associated with successful employment, that accounts for the association. The two most important predictors of self-esteem, in our data, were the respondent's sense of being successful occupationally, and of feeling independent.^{5/} The two most important predictors of life satisfaction were how much she enjoyed the work she was doing, and whether she wished she had a job, or a better job. These findings appear to be true across the entire age range we have been discussing.

DISCUSSION

On the basis of cross-sectional data we cannot, of course, determine the direction of causality between career orientation or work status and self-esteem. It may be that involvement in a career setting brings about experiences that engender feelings of self-worth, and it may be that those women who feel relatively good about themselves are the most likely to initiate and pursue a career. In fact, we believe that both processes are at work. As Kohn (1980) has argued, "...the relationship between work and psychological functioning is quintessentially reciprocal" (p. 206). Kohn suggests that "...people who do substantively complex work come to think of themselves as capable of doing difficult and challenging tasks-- and thus deserve respect in everyone's eyes, including their own.... similarly, people who do substantively simple work come to think of themselves as capable of nothing more..." (p. 204). Kohn and his colleagues (Kohn and Schooler, 1978; Miller et al, 1979) have demonstrated a reciprocal relationship between the substantive complexity of work and intellectual flexibility, as one component of psychological functioning, for both men and women. Our data are consistent with this approach, and in addition suggest that substantive complexity is an important factor in determining how much people enjoy the work they are doing.^{6/}

In fact, the desire to engage in work of appropriate substantive complexity has been one of the major motivating forces underlying the decision of many women such as the CEW respondents to earn graduate degrees and to pursue professional careers. While many analyses of women's labor force participation have been couched in economic terms -- such as Oppenheimer's (1977, 1978) investigation of the factors affecting the husband's ability to provide for his family -- such an approach seems inadequate to explain the decision of wives of relatively affluent professionals to enter the labor force.

Our data also demonstrate the importance of taking into account a woman's self-view in assessing the relationship between her work and her sense of well-being. Studies which simply compare employed wives with housewives, without ascertaining how the women view themselves and the role of work in their lives, and without assessing how appropriate the job is in terms of the woman's abilities and aspirations, add little to our knowledge about the meaning of work to women today.

Block (1973) has described mature ego functioning as involving the development of both agentic and communal qualities; our data illustrate that appropriately challenging, enjoyable work does lead to enhanced feelings of instrumentality, and further suggests that women who view themselves as having agentic qualities are apt to express dissatisfaction with their lives if their current roles do not afford recognition and expression of these qualities. At the same time, marital and parental roles continue to be important sources of self-esteem for women. Indeed, it appears that one reason successful career experience has a positive effect on self-esteem and life satisfaction is that, in addition to creating or confirming a sense of competence, it enhances one's sense of interpersonal effectiveness.

Our findings are also consistent with the argument of Baruch and Barnett (1980) that development of a sense of occupational competence and involvement in a variety of roles both serve to enhance the psychological well-being of women. Our larger sample, however, has allowed us to examine differences among women with different levels of attachment to the work force, and to suggest that the conflicts associated with combining family roles with high-level career achievement may vary with the age cohort of the women involved.

The attitudes expressed by our respondents -- that they wish they had finished their education and initiated their careers sooner, but they would not forego their marital and parental experiences -- suggest the conflicts facing a younger generation of women. In our current research project, which grew out of the study just described, we are concentrating on the career development patterns of men and women in the early years following receipt of a degree, with particular emphasis on the effects of timing of marital and parental events, and on the effects of spouse's career concerns and development. We will be able to describe actual and preferred patterns and arrangements for combining career and marital/family roles, and the relative emphasis placed on each role, for both men and women, and to analyze the relationship between career satisfaction and marital satisfaction. A third major goal is to compare career development patterns, aspirations, and outcomes of women who have returned to school after interruptions for marriage, parenthood, or employment, with those of women and men who have not experienced such interruptions. This new sample includes 1182 respondents -- 589 women who had come to CEW during the years 1974-1977, and 457 women and 136 men who received graduate or professional degrees from the University of Michigan in 1977. We are just completing coding and keypunching of these questionnaires, and analysis will begin this spring.

One motivation for the new study is the fact that, in many ways, the women coming to CEW today are rather different from those who came in the early years. Since a description of these changes may be useful to those who wish to understand the issues facing women who are returning to school today, in the following section we will turn to our annual participant records to present a brief description of the current population of CEW users.

CHANGES IN CEW POPULATION

Between 1100 and 1200 women seek individual first-time appointments at CEW each year.^{7/} Annual records, based on information supplied by each new participant, allow us to describe our current population, and to note changes along key dimensions over the years. The following summary of some of these figures may help to illustrate the variety of issues involved, and to suggest the breadth and complexity of the counseling process at CEW.

Of the 1136 women who came to CEW for the first time in 1980, 19 percent were currently enrolled as undergraduates, 17 percent were enrolled as graduate students, 39 percent were employed and not enrolled in school, and 24 percent were neither employed nor enrolled in school. As might be expected from national employment trends, these figures indicate a significant shift in the employment status of CEW participants over the years: the proportion who are neither employed nor enrolled in school has dropped (from 51 percent in 1965, to 40 percent in 1970, to 24 percent in 1980); among those who are not currently enrolled in school, the proportion who are employed has increased, from 49 percent in 1970 to 62 percent in 1980, and the proportion who are employed fulltime has increased, from 38 percent in 1970 to 48 percent in 1980. In addition, the proportion of women who are both enrolled in school and employed has increased, from 8 percent in 1970 to 20 percent in 1981. Overall, then, of the new participants in 1981, nearly 60% were employed, either fulltime or parttime.

The proportion of CEW participants who are already enrolled in school has increased in recent years, from 22 percent in 1970 to 37 percent in 1980. This increase appears to reflect at least in part CEW's increasing role in dealing with financial aid problems; the fact that CEW awards

small "critical difference" grants to help U-M students meet financial emergencies has lead to an increase in student participants in recent years. (Overall, about one-third of the 1980 participants cited financial problems or issues as one of the reasons they came to CEW; this figure rose to 73 percent of those who were currently enrolled in school.)

This same factor probably contributes to the rising proportion of black participants. In 1980, 20 percent of CEW participants were black; of those currently enrolled, 38 percent were black. Stated another way, three-fourths of the black participants were students, and nearly four-fifths of them cited financial problems as one of their reasons for coming to CEW. Increasingly, however, black women are coming to CEW for consultation on a wide range of career issues.

Indeed, while concern about financial problems is an increasingly important issue to CEW participants, it is not the only issue which draws women students to CEW. Particularly with respect to undergraduates, the figures suggest that we serve a population which sees itself as somewhat different from the traditional student: 50 percent of the CEW participants who are already enrolled as undergraduates are 25 years old or more (only a third are less than 22 years old); 54 percent are employed (22% fulltime, 33% parttime); one-third are enrolled as parttime students. Of the participants who are already enrolled as graduate students, 50 percent are 30 years old or older.

With respect to the level of education already achieved, CEW serves a wide spectrum: of the women who had first-time appointments at CEW in 1980, 8 percent had no college education, 30 percent had some college but no degree, 34 percent had a bachelor's degree, 9 percent had some graduate work but no degree, and 20 percent had graduate degrees. This diversity

has been characteristic of CEW's population from the beginning; the figures just cited are not strikingly different from those of earlier years. With respect to their current educational goals, 28 percent of the 1980 participants were interested in completing a bachelor's degree, 26 percent were pursuing or considering a master's degree, and 11 percent were interested in a Ph.D., M.D. or J.D. degree. One of CEW's major functions is suggested by the fact that fully 20 percent of the 1980 participants were uncertain about the level or type of degree they wished to pursue. (That figure rises to 35 percent among those who are neither employed nor enrolled in school.)

With respect to marital status, 42 percent of the 1980 participants were single, 35 percent were married, and 21 percent were divorced. These figures show considerable change from the early years: in 1970 roughly 70 percent were married, 20 percent were single, and 10 percent were divorced, and in 1965, nearly 80 percent were married. In line with these changes, over half of the recent participants have no children, whereas in 1965 only 12 percent had no children. Average age of CEW participants has remained about 30 or 31 for 10 years or more, compared to an average of 38 in 1965. Overall, in 1980, nearly half of CEW participants (48.2%) were in the 25-34 age range, with 22 percent younger than 25, 21 percent aged 35-44, and 9 percent who were 45 or older.

Thus, in contrast to the early years of the Center, when a typical participant may have been a housewife in her early or mid-thirties, whose children were moving out of the pre-school stage and who was considering a return to school to complete her education, or to earn a new degree in preparation for employment when the time seemed right, a significant number of CEW participants today are slightly younger women--in their late

20's or early 30's--who are already employed and whose concern is not with moving out of the house enough to return to school or to seek employment, but rather with selecting a more appropriate, satisfying, or promising career path. Frequently, for such women, whether to return to school for a different or higher degree is one of the issues to be decided, but the decision is couched more specifically within a framework of immediate and long-range employment concerns that seemed to be true in earlier years. For example, for such a woman, a return to school may entail giving up her current employment; particularly for those women who have no other source of support, such a decision must be weighed carefully in terms of the probably long-term pay-off. Current economic conditions make women especially wary concerning their career choices; they feel they cannot afford to pursue fields in which there may be few jobs, especially if they will be limited to a given geographic area once they have finished. Yet for many women, this means abandoning thoughts of fields they have previously been interested in, and selecting another about which they may know very little. Counseling at centers like CEW can have a major impact in helping women sort through these issues, and to move from a state of doubt and uncertainty, in which many different goals are being considered, to the point where they are ready to proceed toward carefully selected goals which reflect a realistic assessment of their abilities and their options.

The breadth and complexity of the counseling process can also be described in terms of the issues women come to discuss. Of the 1980 participants, about 40 percent indicated that they were interested in issues related to vocational or career planning; about one-third wished

to discuss specific educational problems or plans; and one-third referred to financial aid problems. Approximately 15 percent indicated that they needed help with the whole process of setting goals for themselves. ^{8/}

As part of an attempt to arrive at a clearer picture of the issues women are dealing with today, CEW's counselors were asked to describe the primary focus of each interview during a recent four-month period, and to indicate the general stage of career development of each participant. Overall, 52 percent of the interviews during this period were described as being primarily concerned with career issues (and this figure approached 75 percent of those who were not already enrolled in school). Financial aid was seen as the primary focus of about 25 percent of the interviews; for student participants, the figure was 53 percent. Very few women--less than 5 percent--were described as having come in primarily to discuss personal problems (that is, issues having to do with personality problems, relationships with others, family problems, or other matters beyond the scope of the usual career, educational, or financial aid questions). However, many interviews involved a mix of these various concerns; for example, 45 percent of the interviews included some discussion of personal problems, as relevant factors affecting the educational or career choices of the participant.

Counselors described CEW participants during this period as falling into four major groups, with respect to level of career development: 17 percent has established a clear career goal which they were pursuing; 19 percent were in the process of formulating a new goal which appeared to be a natural development or outgrowth of their experience thus far (such as returning to school for a higher degree in the field in which they had

been working); 25 percent were changing career fields or goals, in a move away from an earlier choice which no longer seemed appropriate or satisfying; and 23 percent had never established a career goal, and were attempting to do so for the first time.

The social and cultural milieu in which women are making educational and career choices today is clearly vastly changed from that of 1964, when CEW opened its doors. Employment for most of her life is now the normal expectation for a woman, rather than a deviant path. And because this is so, more and more women are coming to realize that such employment should afford adequate challenge to their abilities, and adequate recompense in terms of income and respect. Economic conditions and demographic shifts have made certain fields less attractive than 15 years ago, and new households, as well as many older households, are now operating on budgets which assume two incomes, rather than regarding the wife's income as a temporary source of savings or extras. Nevertheless, the process CEW participants are dealing with is the same as it has been: selecting and pursuing educational and career goals which are currently feasible, which are compatible with one's other concerns in life, and which promise adequate opportunity for continued growth and development. Just as in 1964, women at all stages of education, and with varying levels of employment experience already, are confronting this task, and helping them do so remains CEW's prime responsibility and goal.

Footnotes

1. The six items included in the self-esteem index were adapted from the Rosenberg Self-Esteem scale (1965). Respondents rated the six items (see Fig. 1), on a five-point scale (agree; ^{mostly agree;} neither agree nor disagree; mostly disagree; disagree). The response categories were coded from 1 to 5, with lower values assigned to answers reflecting higher self-esteem; thus smaller numbers--closer to 1.00--indicate higher self-esteem. The self-esteem index is an unweighted mean of the six items.
2. Overall, married women showed significantly higher self-esteem than did single women (most of whom were in the youngest age group). Married and divorced women did not differ significantly in self-esteem.
3. For a fuller discussion of the "What is missing?" responses, see Manis and Markus, 1980.
4. Multiple Classification Analysis is a statistical technique for analysing nominal-level variables, which permits an assessment of the effect of a given predictor while controlling for the effects of other variables included in the analysis. The importance of the work-enjoyment, job-missing, and independence variables was demonstrated in MCA's in which the control variables included respondent's age, marital status, work status, level of education, father's occupation, mother's education, husband's salary, and respondent's job title. The "occupationally successful" item was included in equations along with enjoyment of work, independence, marital status, and a "socially successful" item.
5. We did not have a direct measure of marital satisfaction in this study. However, the FTHI's were generally the least likely to say that they would do anything different about getting married, if they could start over (see Manis and Markus, 1978). For a comparison of the "love-missing" versus the "job-missing" responses to the "What is missing?" question, see Manis, 1980.

6. Generally, respondents in more demanding and challenging positions, such as university teaching appointments, were the most likely to say that they enjoyed their work very much.

7. Each year, several hundred additional appointments are made by women returning for a second or later visit. The statistical data summarized here, however, is based only on the first-time appointments.

8. In most respects, the 1981 figures appear to be similar to those for 1980. However, there appears to be an increase, across all enrollment/employment categories, in the proportion of women concerned about job or career issues. We should also note that the issues women are concerned about do not vary greatly by age.

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FIGURE 1
SELF-ESTEEM ITEMS

1. I am able to do things as well as most other people.
2. I take a positive attitude toward myself.
3. I feel that I do not have much to be proud of.
4. When I do a job, I do it well.
5. Sometimes, I feel that I can't do anything right.
6. I feel that my life is not very useful.

CAREER EMPHASIS ITEMS

1. For me, it is (would be) more important to help my husband in his career than to have a career of my own.
2. The rewards and satisfactions of raising a family are more important to me than anything else.
3. Seriously pursuing a career involves costs in other areas of my life that I am not willing to accept.
4. I can't picture having a fully satisfying life without a career of my own.
5. I would not take a job that would interfere with the things I like to do with my family.
6. I can't imagine having a fully satisfying life without having children.

Table 1

RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN WORK STATUS AND SELF-ESTEEM, BY AGE
(Mean ratings on self-esteem index*)

All Respondents

<u>Age</u>	<u>Overall</u>	<u>Not Working</u>	<u>Working Parttime</u>	<u>Working Fulltime, <\$17,000</u>	<u>Working Fulltime, \$17,000+</u>	<u>Significance**</u>
25-34	1.69 (332)	1.80 (102)	1.71 (91)	1.65 (108)	1.38 (31)	.0064
35-44	1.66 (333)	1.77 (73)	1.63 (110)	1.61 (89)	1.65 (61)	.4046
45-54	1.62 (233)	1.73 (50)	1.71 (72)	1.61 (63)	1.37 (48)	.0084
55-64	1.65 (100)	1.83 (40)	1.53 (18)	1.53 (20)	1.52 (22)	.0682

Currently Married Respondents

<u>Age</u>	<u>Overall</u>	<u>Not Working</u>	<u>Working Parttime</u>	<u>Working Fulltime, <\$17,000</u>	<u>Working Fulltime, \$17,000</u>	<u>Significance**</u>
25-34	1.63 (228)	1.78 (84)	1.66 (71)	1.50 (53)	1.27 (20)	.0009
35-44	1.63 (264)	1.75 (66)	1.60 (100)	1.56 (59)	1.58 (39)	.2452
45-54	1.57 (184)	1.68 (43)	1.61 (60)	1.62 (41)	1.34 (40)	.0465
55-64	1.64 (77)	1.87 (33)	1.43 (15)	1.50 (13)	1.47 (16)	.0227

*The self-esteem index is an unweighted mean of six items, which were rated on a 5-point scale (agree; mostly agree; neither agree nor disagree; mostly disagree; disagree). Lower values--closer to 1.00--indicate higher self-esteem.

**Based on one-way analyses of variance within each age category.

Table 2

RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN WORK STATUS AND LIFE SATISFACTION
(Mean rating: "I think of my life today as interesting and satisfying"*)

All Respondents

<u>Age</u>	<u>Overall</u>	<u>Not Working</u>	<u>Working Parttime</u>	<u>Working Fulltime, <\$17,000</u>	<u>Working Fulltime, \$17,000+</u>	<u>Significance**</u>
25-34	1.98 (332)	2.36 (102)	1.89 (91)	1.81 (108)	1.61 (31)	.0001
35-44	1.89 (332)	2.00 (73)	1.95 (110)	1.81 (88)	1.74 (61)	.3607
45-54	1.82 (232)	2.18 (49)	1.92 (72)	1.76 (63)	1.40 (48)	.0024
55-64	1.84 (99)	2.05 (39)	2.06 (18)	1.75 (20)	1.36 (22)	.1033

Currently Married Respondents

<u>Age</u>	<u>Overall</u>	<u>Not Working</u>	<u>Working Parttime</u>	<u>Working Fulltime, <\$17,000</u>	<u>Working Fulltime, \$17,000+</u>	<u>Significance**</u>
25-34	1.96 (228)	2.36 (84)	1.93 (71)	1.57 (53)	1.50 (20)	.0000
35-44	1.84 (264)	2.00 (66)	1.97 (100)	1.61 (59)	1.62 (39)	.0341
45-54	1.76 (183)	2.24 (42)	1.78 (60)	1.61 (41)	1.37 (40)	.0013
55-64	1.70 (76)	1.97 (32)	1.60 (15)	1.62 (13)	1.31 (16)	.2107

*Based on a 5-point scale: 1=agree; 2=mostly agree; 3=neither agree nor disagree; 4=mostly disagree; 5=disagree.

**Based on one-way analyses of variance within age categories.

Table 3

RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN WORK STATUS AND INDEX OF LIFE SATISFACTION
(Mean Ratings: Sum of "Interesting and Satisfying Life" and "Doing All"*)

All Respondents

<u>Age</u>	<u>Overall</u>	<u>Not Working</u>	<u>Working Parttime</u>	<u>Working Fulltime, < \$17,000</u>	<u>Working Fulltime, \$17,000+</u>	<u>Probability**</u>
25-34	4.32 (327)	4.83 (100)	4.16 (90)	4.17 (105)	3.68 (31)	.0012
35-44	4.28 (323)	4.35 (71)	4.33 (106)	4.22 (87)	4.17 (59)	.8884
45-54	4.20 (228)	4.63 (49)	4.30 (70)	4.16 (62)	3.64 (47)	.0378
55-64	4.23 (96)	4.58 (38)	4.35 (17)	4.16 (19)	3.59 (22)	.2078

Currently Married

<u>Age</u>	<u>Overall</u>	<u>Not Working</u>	<u>Working Parttime</u>	<u>Working Fulltime, < \$17,000</u>	<u>Working Fulltime, \$17,000+</u>	<u>Probability**</u>
25-34	4.19 (225)	4.71 (82)	4.14 (71)	3.69 (52)	3.55 (20)	.0005
35-44	4.20 (256)	4.36 (64)	4.33 (96)	3.90 (59)	4.03 (37)	.2590
45-54	4.11 (179)	4.64 (42)	4.09 (58)	3.97 (40)	3.69 (39)	.0892
55-64	3.99 (73)	4.45 (31)	3.57 (14)	4.17 (12)	3.31 (16)	.0856

* Possible scores ranged from 2 to 9, with lower scores indicating greater satisfaction. Based on respondent's rating of "I think of my life today as interesting and satisfying" and "Taking your day-to-day life in general, are you doing all the things you would really like to be doing?"

**Based on one-way analyses of variance within age categories.

TABLE 4
Occupational Title by Age of Respondent

<u>ALL EMPLOYED RESPONDENTS</u>					
	<u>Total</u> N=804	<u>25-34</u> N=247 (30.7%)	<u>35-44</u> N=281 (35.0%)	<u>45-54</u> N=206 (25.6%)	<u>55-64</u> N=70 (8.7%)
<u>Occupational Title</u>	%	%	%	%	%
Research/adm. assoc.; prog.coord.; consultant; hosp.adm.; principal	14.1	12.6	15.7	14.1	12.9
Teacher (k-12)	11.8	8.5	14.9	13.1	7.1
Academic appointment (faculty-college/univ.)	10.1	8.5	13.2	8.7	7.1
Secretarial/Clerical	9.5	10.9	6.0	11.7	11.4
Social work; Counseling; Speech Therapy	8.6	8.9	7.5	10.7	5.7
Librarian	5.2	3.6	6.0	5.3	7.1

RESPONDENTS EMPLOYED FULL-TIME, SALARY \$17,000+

	<u>Total</u> N=161	<u>25-34</u> N=30 (18.6%)	<u>35-44</u> N=62 (38.5%)	<u>45-54</u> N=47 (29.2%)	<u>55-64</u> N=22 (13.7%)
<u>Occupational Title</u>	%	%	%	%	%
Research/adm. assoc.; prog.coord.; consultant; hosp.adm.; principal	21.1	23.3	17.7	25.5	18.2
Academic appointment (faculty-college/univ.)	19.9	13.3	30.6	14.9	9.1
Teacher (k-12)	12.4	6.7	11.3	17.0	13.6
Social work; Counseling; Speech Therapy	7.5	---	6.5	14.9	4.5
Librarian	6.2	10.0	4.8	2.1	13.6
Manager, VP, Dir., Own Business	5.0	3.3	4.8	6.4	4.5
Secretarial/clerical	1.9	---	3.2	---	4.5

TABLE 5

Type of Employer by Age of Respondent

<u>Type of Employer</u>	<u>ALL EMPLOYED RESPONDENTS</u>				
	<u>Total</u> N=832	<u>25-34</u> N=258 (31.0%)	<u>35-44</u> N=290 (34.9%)	<u>45-54</u> N=213 (25.6%)	<u>55-64</u> N=71 (8.5%)
Academic Institutions	26.8	24.4	32.0	21.6	29.6
K-12 schools	16.8	11.2	20.0	19.7	15.5
Government	9.9	10.5	9.0	10.8	8.5
Non-profit agencies (incl. hospitals)	10.9	11.6	9.3	12.7	9.9
Business	17.7	23.3	12.8	16.9	19.7
Self-employed business	5.2	4.7	4.8	5.6	7.0
Private prof. practice	2.4	2.7	1.7	3.8	---
Self-employed artist	2.2	3.9	.7	1.4	4.2

RESPONDENTS EMPLOYED FULL-TIME, SALARY \$17,000+

<u>Type of Employer</u>	<u>Total</u> N=161	<u>25-34</u> N=31 (19.0%)	<u>35-44</u> N=62 (38.0%)	<u>45-54</u> N=48 (29.4%)	<u>55-64</u> N=22 (13.5%)
Academic institutions	29.4	16.1	42.0	16.7	40.9
K-12 schools	19.6	6.5	17.7	27.1	27.3
Government	15.3	22.6	12.9	18.8	4.5
Non-profit agencies (incl. hospitals)	9.2	9.7	6.5	14.6	4.5
Business	12.3	22.6	11.3	8.3	9.1
Own Business	8.0	9.7	4.8	8.3	13.6
Private prof. practice	3.1	6.5	1.6	4.2	---

Table 6

Maternal Employment at Different Points of Family Cycle,
By Age and Employment Status of Respondent
(Ever Married Respondents)

<u>Age of Respondent</u>	<u>Respondent's Current Employment Status</u>				
	<u>Total</u>	<u>Not Working</u>	<u>Working Parttime</u>	<u>Fulltime ≤\$17,000</u>	<u>Fulltime \$17,000+</u>
[A] <u>Mother Employed Before Marriage:</u>					
Under 35 (260)	79.2	77.0 (87)	79.7 (74)	79.7 (74)	84.0 (25)
35-44 (283)	79.9	82.8 (64)	76.9 (91)	80.5 (82)	80.4 (46)
45-64 (250)	80.8	84.8 (66)	74.0 (73)	83.1 (59)	82.7 (52)
[B] <u>Mother Employed After Marriage, Before Children:</u>					
Under 35 (257)	46.3	45.2 (84)	40.5 (74)	50.0 (74)	56.0 (25)
35-44 (283)	37.5	39.1 (64)	34.1 (91)	39.0 (82)	39.1 (46)
45-64 (250)	25.6	22.7 (60)	23.3 (73)	28.8 (59)	28.8 (52)
[C] <u>Mother Employed With Preschool Children at Home:</u>					
Under 35 (257)	27.7	28.2 (84)	26.0 (74)	24.3 (74)	20.0 (25)
35-44 (284)	22.2	17.2 (64)	21.7 (92)	19.5 (82)	34.8 (46)
45-64 (250)	14.8	7.6 (66)	9.6 (73)	25.4 (59)	19.2 (52)
[D] <u>Mother Employed with Older Children at Home:</u>					
Under 35 (259)	61.0	60.5 (86)	64.9 (74)	62.2 (74)	48.0 (25)
35-44 (284)	55.3	60.9 (64)	47.8 (92)	56.1 (82)	60.9 (46)
45-64 (250)	42.8	27.3 (66)	38.4 (73)	52.5 (59)	57.7 (52)